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ON THE AESTHETICS OF THE SHORT POEMS OF CATULLUS (CARM. 16)

1. For a long time, modern philologists have not given to carmen 16 of Catullus the attention due to it on account of its significance. In several purified Catullus editions it is not even contained,[1] and those editions that, with a critical apparatus and commentary, contain the complete Catullus-corpus, do not attribute to this poem such a significance as the Latin successor poets following Catullus.

According to Kroll, this poem of furious tone should not be taken earnestly, Catullus obviously wrote it in his indignation.[2] It is regarded by Quinn as an urban trifling.[3] Schäfer, although adding interesting ideas to the composition of the poem, essentially satisfies himself with the clarification of the biographical data.[4] Kinsey directs all his efforts to show the pathic and effeminate nature of Catullus.[5] Fehling raises a correct idea when he does not attribute a special significance to the drastic wording framing the poem. It is, however, disputable that he sharply separates lines 1 and 12–14 from the whole of the poem.[6] The main merit of Winter's study is that he clarifies the meaning of the words *pius* and *castus*, refutes Kinsey's supposition, and besides he stresses the significance of the aesthetic message of the poem, even if not properly.[7] G. N. Sandy steps even farther than he by recognizing the significance of the poem in regard to literary criticism. Of the above interpretations we hold Sandy's interpretation most significant.[8]

2. What was the reaction to carmen 16 in antiquity, what places were referred to, and what parts of it were left without mentioning? The first poet successor composing in the knowledge and spirit of this carmen, is the exiled Ovid. He admits that his earlier works may appear to be immoral, this, however, is no reason to regard his life as immoral:

Crede mihi, distant mores a carmine nostro:
Vita verecunda est, Musa iocosa mea.
Magnaque pars mendax operum est et ficta meorum:
plus sibi permisit compositore suo. (Trist. II 353–56)

These lines obviously re-echo lines 5–6 of c. 16, *viz.: Nam castum esse decet pium poetam/ ipsum versiculos nihil necesse est.* There is, however, an important difference between the Catullian and Ovidian wording. Catullus only says that the poem should not be moral, only the poet should be. Ovid steps back. He calls his poems *mendax* and *ficta* and, practically, he recognizes that his poems went too far, *viz.: plus sibi permisit compositore suo.* From this wording it appears as if also he himself would hold his poems reproachable. With Catullus there is no question about admission, on the contrary, according to him such tone gives piquancy to the short poems, *viz.: qui tunc denique habent salem ac leporem, / si sunt molliculi ac parum pudici* (16,5–8).

The second volume of the Tristia is written by Ovid to Augustus, and already in the beginning of the letter mentions that he was condemned by the emperor because of his poems of immoral tone, first of all because of the Ars amatoria:

Carmina fecerunt, ut me moresque notaret
iam demum visa Caesar ab Arte mea. (II 7–8)

In Ovid's case occurred against what Catullus had protested, *viz.* that from the work conclusions were drawn regarding the morals of the author. In the same poem he returns to the question once more, and from his words it is evident that the harmful character of his *lascivus* poems is seen by the emperor in the fact that they stimulated also others to a libidinous life:

Haec tibi me invisum lascivia fecit, ob Artes,
quis ratus es vetitos sollicitare toros.
Sed neque me nuptae didicerunt furta magistro,
quodque parum novit, nemo docere potest.
Sic ego delicias et mollia carmina feci,
strinxerit ut nomen fabula nulla meum. (II 345–350)

Later, in Book IV of the Tristia, in his autobiography, he once more touches this problem with almost the same words (IV 10, 65–68).

Thus, Ovid stresses that his life is chaste, and still he holds his poetry culpable. This is a retreat from the Catullian wording. By all this his aim is to request Augustus to mitigate his punishment:

Tutius exilium pauloque quietius oro,
ut par delicto sit mea poena suo. (II 577–8)

The next Latin poet, who consciously refers to carmen 16, is Martial. In his epigrams such places can be found:

Innocuos censura potest permittere lusus:
lasciva est nobis pagina, vita proba. (I 4,5–8)
Versus hos tamen esse tu memento
Saturnalicios, Apollinaris:
mores non habet hic meos libellus. (XI 15,11–13)

These references tell the same thing as lines 5–6 of carmen 16, *viz.:* from the poems of the poet no conclusions should be drawn regarding his life.

In connection with carmen 16, however, such a thought appears with Martial that is much more significant than the idea of self-defence, and in regard to short poems can be considered as an aesthetic principle of universal validity:

Lex haec carminibus data est iocosis,
ne possint, nisi pruriant, iuvare. (I 35,10–11)

These lines, however, recall lines 7–9 of carmen 16:

qui tunc denique habent salem ac leporem,
si sunt molliculi ac parum pudici,
et quod pruriat incitare possunt.

That idea of Catullus, according to which the charm of the short poems is given by libidinous erotism, is called by Martial *lex*, and by this he calls it an aesthetic principle of universal validity. Martial knows that the application of the principle has consequences of the content and form affecting the whole poetry. With regard to the content it makes possible the discussion of the more licentious and vulgar themes, while with regard to the form it renders such words suitable for poetry that are capable of reflecting these themes accurately.

Versus scribere me parum severos
nec quos praelegat in schola magister,
Corneli, quereris: sed hi libelli,
tamquam coniugibus suis mariti
non possunt sine mentula placere.
Quid si me iubeas thalassionem
verbis dicere non thalassionis?
Quis Floralia vestit et stolatum
permittit meretricibus pudorem. (I 35,1–9)

In order that the poem should please *(placere)* and delight *(iuvare)*. realistic words should be applied that reflect the essence of the concepts well: a spade should be called a spade, with naked frankness:

schemate nec dubio, sed aperte nominat illam
quam recipit sexto mense superba Venus (III 68,7–8)

or in a later poem of his:

quidquid venerit obviam loquamur
morosa sine cogitatione. (XI 6,6–8)

To be sure, Cosconius, the bad poet, crams his poems only with chaste words *(castis verbis)*. It is true, however, that nobody reads them (III 69). Martial is convinced that the opinion of the readers is the real criterion to show which poem is good and which is not. The good poem, the good poet is read. And all those who were read by the Roman public with pleasure, wrote like him:

Lascivam verborum veritatem, id est epigrammaton linguam, excusarem, si meum esset exemplum: sic scribit Catullus, sic Marsus, sic Pedo, sic Gaetulicus, sic quicumque perlegitur.

(Praef. I 9–12)

Thus, that short Catullian statement according to which the poem must rouse erotic excitement in the reader, was formulated by Martial with a more general validity, *viz.:* the poem must delight, and this demand is called by him *lex*. The contemporary and friend of Martial, Pliny the Younger has formulated this principle even more precisely, we could say, even more expertly, and he also reveals that he writes his poems consciously on the basis of this principle, by which his only aim is to please: *his iocamur, ludimus, amamus, dolemus, querimur, irascimur, describimus aliquid modo pressius, modo elatius, atque ipsa varietate temptamus efficere, ut alia aliis, quaedam fortasse omnibus placeant* (Ep. 4,14, 3). But they can only attain approval if they are also playful *(petulans)*. The reader cannot protest against such a tone, because every earnest Roman wrote like this. Thus, here he adopts Martial's argument, *viz.: erit eruditionis tuae cogitare summos illos et gravissimos viros, qui talia scripserunt, non modo lascivia rerum, sed ne verbis quidem nudis abstinuisse: quae nos refugimus, non quia severiores (unde enim?), sed quia timidiores sumus* (4).

This statement is important for us also because it formulates precisely, in prose, what was expounded by Martial also in several poems, *viz.* the essence of the *lascivus* poem: the demand of the *lascivia rerum* and the *nuda verba*. It also deserves attention that Pliny himself does not apply *nuda verba*, not because he would condemn them but because of his more timid nature. Finally, that sentence of his is also decisive for us, in which he briefly but clearly expounds that we have to do with a Catullian aesthetic principle of universal validity, *viz.: Scimus alioqui huius opusculi illam esse verissimum legem, quam Catullus expressit.*

Fully fifty years after Pliny, the application in practice of this *verissima lex* brought a poet again into trouble. One of the counts of indictment against Apuleius was that he wrote frolicsome poems: *at enim ludicros et amatorios fecit.* The poet and orator defends himself by saying that, besides several Greek poets, the Latin Aedituus, Porcius and Catulus also wrote such poems,[9] moreover, this kind of poetry was cultivated also by philosophers. Then he quotes two of his own poems to show to the general public for what poems he is condemned. He cites love-poems written to boys, and in one of them he depicts his simultaneous love to two boys:

Et Critias mea delicia est et salua, Charine,
pars in amore meo, vita, tibi remanet;
ne metuas; nam me ignis et ignis torreat ut vult,
hasce duas flammas, dum potiar, patiar.
Hoc modo sim vobis, unus sibi quisque quod ipse est:
hoc mihi vos eritis, quod duo sint oculi. (Apol. 9)

The second charge against him was that he calls his beloved ones by pseudonyms. He rejects this charge by saying that in Latin poetry this is already a tradition. Beginning with Catullus, the poets gave pseudonyms to their beloved ones, and even such a pious poet like Vergil followed this custom, *viz.:* he called the boy to whom he wrote a poem Alexis. And finally, to sum up what he had said, to answer to the malicious calumniators, he said: *Catullum ita respondentem malivolis non legistis:*

nam castum esse decet pium poetam
ipsum, versiculos nihil necesse est?

And to put also an emperor beside the poet, he quotes that poem of emperor Hadrian, by which he adorned the tomb of his favourite poet Voconius: *Lascivus versu, mente pudicus eras.* Then he adds as follows: *quod nunquam ita dixisset, si forent lepidiora carmina argumentum impudicitiae habenda* (11).

It is clear from the aforesaid that Apuleius also treats the Catullian lines as an aesthetic principle, and that he utilized Martial's and Pliny's way of defence, the reference to the Roman tradition. In connection with his poems his adversaries might have mentioned the attribute *petulans*, the same word that also Pliny used in connection with his own poems: *ex quibus tamen si nonnula tibi petulantiora paulo videbuntur* (Ep. 4,14,4). At Apuleius: *et quid tam petulans habent omnes versus mei?* (Ap. 9). All this shows that the *verissima lex* formulated by Martial and Pliny also theoretically was a well known aesthetic principle in the age of Apuleius, and Catullus was regarded as its inventor.

Later on, in an interesting way, his name was pushed into the background and the formulations of Martial and Pliny came into prominence. In this respect the Cento nuptialis of Ausonius is illuminating. The poet, in

his recommendation written to the poem, offers excuses and calls his work a *frivolum et nullius pretii opusculum*. He is especially ashamed of having used Vergil's lines at the preparation of the *cento: piget enim Vergiliani carminis dignitatem tam ioculari dehonestasse materia*. His only excuse is that he wrote it on the order of emperor Valentinian. In fact, the emperor also wrote such a *cento*, and he wondered whose would be better, that of Ausonius or his. Ausonius prepares the *cento* and describes the nuptial ceremony accordingly, and thus he arrives at the wedding-night. Here he breaks the story and inserts a prose passage, in which he says that everything that he has described till now was intended for chaste ears: *castis auribus*. Now, however, as it is customary in such cases, he continues with the licentiousness of the Fescennine songs, because this is permitted by the old custom: *verborumque petulantiam notus vetere instituto ludus admittit, cetera quoque cubiculi et lectuli opera prodentur*.

Hereafter follows such a concentrated erotic description of the wedding-night that exceeds even the tone of the Catullian and Martialian licentiousnesses (101 – 131). Finally, the whole work is closed down by an excusation, whose aim is to ask for the forbearance of the reader for his licentious tone, with reference to the *verissima lex* formulated by Martial and Pliny: *Sed cum legeris, adesto mihi adversum eos, qui, ut Iuvenalis ait "Curios simulant et Bacchanalia vivunt" ne fortasse mores meos spectent de carmine. "Lasciva est nobis pagina, vita proba", ut Martialis dicit. Meminerint autem, quippe eruditi, probissimo viro Plinio in poematis lasciviam, in moribus constituisse censuram; prurire opusculum Sulpiciae, frontem caperare; esse Apuleium in vita philosophum, in epigrammatis amatorem*, etc. From the words of Ausonius it can be concluded that, as a man of puritan morals, he feels ashamed of this licentiousness, but he is obliged to obey the traditions. If he wants to write about the wedding interestingly and realistically, he can do this only with the naked description of the facts of the wedding: *etenim fabula de nuptiis et, velit nolit, aliter haec sacra non constant*. In this sentence he again rephrases the lines of Martialis: *quid si me iubeas thalassionem verbis dicere non thalassionis* (I 35,6 – 7). At the same time he fulfils the demand of *prurire* in such a degree that can already rightly be held an exaggeration.

3. From the aforesaid it is evident that the antique poets held important in carmen 16 something quite different than the modern classical philologists. From the statements of the poem they do not draw conclusions regarding the life of Catullus, they regard the poem as a vehicle of messages of fundamental importance. We also feel that the key of the interpretation of carmen 16 must be sought in this direction

We think that the root of the problem must be seen in the love conception of Catullus. In fact, Catullus attributes to himself such deep feelings in love that in Greek and pre-Catullian Latin literature could only be attributed to women. In the Greek tragedy the medium of self-consuming eternal love is the woman, and also in Alexandrian poetry only they can speak about the tormenting beauty of their love. This characteristically Catullian

love is suggestively reflected also by those comparisons by which he exactly wants to elucidate his amour to Lesbia. Catullus confesses to Lesbia that he does not only love her as the lover does his sweetheart in general, but as the father loves his child and his sons-in-law (72,3 – 4). In the Iliad Andromache tells this to Hector (IV 429). In carmen 11 Catullus feels that his love has dropped as a flower hurt by the plough-iron (23 – 25). In the Sappho-fragment a woman confesses like this about her love (fr. 91). In carmen 68 he says he would have tolerated, if his sweetheart had deceived him only seldom, just like Juno who also tolerated Jove's infidelities (135 – 40). In this comparison Catullus is a representative of the female principle, and Lesbia that of the inconstant Jove. Thus, Catullus illustrates his love with comparisons, by which earlier women had depicted their love, and by this, of course, he does not want to compare himself with the women, but he wants to stress the peculiar profoundness of his love. It is worth mentioning that H. Akbar Khan at the analysis of carmen 3 arrives at the same conclusion, *viz.*: Catullus in love is like women; he sets fidelity above infidelity.[10] His statements were obviously regarded as bold innovations in contemporary Rome, and on the basis of the earlier concept of masculine love they could rightly be held effeminate.

In connection with carmen 16 it would also be important to clarify, why had Catullus to formulate almost statutorily that the poems of the poet may differ from the poet's life, and that it is not absolutely necessary for life to be in harmony with the poem. If we consider that Catullus has left behind a rather small oeuvre, and that already in antiquity he was called *doctus Catullus*, we must presume that whatever he wrote down, he did consciously, especially in the case of such poems, which he deemed to be suitable also for publication. I cannot agree with Kroll, who maintains that Catullus made this statement just in his rage, and therefore it should not be taken seriously.[11] The Latin poet successors took it right seriously. From this it is obvious that Catullus also held the clarification of the relationship between the *pius poeta* and the *versus* a matter of principle. From the statements of the poet successors it is also obvious that in common knowledge not the principle formulated by Catullus was living, but its very opposite,[12] *viz.*: the author and the work must be in harmony with each other. Cicero in Brutus writes about Tubero as follows: *Et quoniam Stoicorum est facta mentio, Q. Aulius Tubero fuit illo tempore, L. Paulli nepos; ... vita severus et congruens cum ea disciplina quam colebat, paulo etiam durior; ... sed ut vita sic oratione durus, incultus, horridus* (117). Tubero is a Stoic, and his life is in harmony with his teachings, even his speaking is like his life. The Stoic human ideal is formulated by É. Bréhier as follows: *la vie normale de l'homme, c' est la vie de l' époux, du citoyen, du magistrat. Nul divorce chez eux entre la vie contemplative et la vie pratique...*[13] Well, it appears that, standing on the basis of Stoic ethics, from the poems of Catullus one could easily conclude that these reflect the life of Catullus, they are congruent with it. And when Catullus declares that life and the poems should not be in harmony with each other, then essentially he attacks a well known stoic theorem. Furius and Aurelius, using one of the well know theorems of

stoic ethics, try to defame the virile honour of Catullus. This upsets the poet, because he knows that these severe dragons of virtue do not at all live according to stoic ethics, and they are not only unmanly, but expressly pathici From the Catullian formulation it appears that Furius and Aurelius are the archetypes of those Martialian and Iuvenalian figures, who put on the mask of the strict Catos, but if nobody sees them, they are capable of doing ugly things.

But what aeshetic principles could Furius and Aurelius confess? In my opinion they were backers of the followers of Ennius and of high poetry, who in poetry and private life demanded severity. Cicero also belonged to them. In the Brutus he calls himself the possessor of all knowledge and virtues. He holds himself the greatest Roman orator. He perfectly knows philosophy bringing up to virtuous life: *nemo qui philosophiam complexus esset matrem omnium bene factorum beneque dictorum* (Brut. 322). In connection with carmen 49 Ferguson arrives at the conclusion that in this poem Catullus ridicules the great orator, who in one of his letters styles himself *omnium patronus* (Fam. 6,7,4).[14] Buchheit holds carmen 50 a programme poem, in which Catullus professes a poetry and way of life condemned by Cicero in his different manifestations. It is also characteristic that Catullus writes this poem to Calvus, Cicero's adversary both in oration and politics.[15] Decisive is Cicero's remark, by which he criticizes the poetry of the epicurean Philodemus: from the immoral tone of his poems he infers the immoral life of their author: *Est autem hic, de quo loquor, non philosophia solum, sed etiam ceteris studiis, quae fere ceteros Epicureos neglegere dicunt, perpolitus . . . Rogatus, invitatus, coactus, ita multa ad istum de ipso quoque scripsit, ut omnes hominis libidines, omnia stupra, omnia cenarum conviviorumque genera, adulteria denique eius delicatissimis versibus expressit, in quibus, si qui velit, possit istius tamquam in speculo vitam intueri* (Pis. 70). Cicero expounds here the same idea, against which Catullus defends himself in carmen 16. Cicero also formulates it almost statutorily: *qualis autem homo ipse esset, talem eius esse orationem; orationi autem facta similia, factis vitam* (Tusc. 5,16, 47).

It is worth while to attempt also to answer the question, on what consideration Catullus made delighting the basis and aim of short poems: *Qui tum denique habent salem ac leporem, / si sunt molliculi ac parum pudici, / et quod pruriat incitare possunt* (16, 8 – 10).

He could formulate this way on the basis of three considerations, *viz.*: a) He knew from experience that such licentious poems are really liked by the public; b) he made the *delight* principle of the epicureans the aesthetic principle of poetry; c) on the influence of earlier poets. P. Giuffrida expounds that Catullus wrote carmen 16 on the basis of the epicurean ethics.[16] J. Granarolo, referring to E. Castorina and L. Ferrero, denies the epicureanism of Catullus.[17] Castorina states: the theorems *vita verecunda* and *Musa iocosa* were also used by Euenus of Paros a century before Epicurus.[18] Ferrero, on the other hand, maintains that Catullus formulates this idea not as a literary or philosophical programme, but with a polemic purpose, *viz.*: his character was defamed, and he wants to reply to this.[19] In my opi-

nion neither of these arguments is weighty enough to exclude the possibility of the epicurean impulse of these lines. In fact, the circumstance that such formulation occurs also in the pre-Epicurean times, is not yet an argument against its having spread in broader circles through the teachings of epicurism. We believe this cannot be denied. It cannot be regarded as a decisive argument either that Catullus formulated this way for polemic reasons. As a matter of fact, anger and fury do not exclude consciousness and a more profound argumentation. Granarolo is right in so far as Catullus was not a real epicurean and his conception of love is distant from the epicurean conception of love.[20] Catullus as a poet, however, must not be an epicurean to formulate now and then on the basis of an epicurean impulse. Poets are frequently eclectic.

We can presume already in advance that Catullus knew the most characteristic epicurean doctrines, because he lived in an age, when epicurism, perhaps during the whole history of Rome, was most widespread. Its great popularity was already regarded by Cicero almost dangerous from the viewpoint of the Roman state.[21] In Herculaneum flourished the epicurean school of Philodemus,[22] and in Naples that of Siron. Philodemus dealt with poetics, too. From the fragments of his De poematis a poetry comprehension emerges, which is similar to that of Catullus' and Ovidius'.[23] In M. Fuhrmans opinion Philodemus stressed the autonomy of the poetical work and the principle of delighting.[24]

It is no accident either that exactly Lucretius, a contemporary of Catullus, wrote that work on the human beauty of epicurism, which is an unparalleled achievement also as compared with the values of Greek literature. We do not propose to discuss here the relations between Catullus and Lucretius, it is sufficient for us to point that research has even so far discovered a varied relationship between the oeuvre of the two poets.[25] Essentially, both poets are devoured by the same question, *viz.:* how man can stand in the whirl of passions, how one can get into possession of cloudless happiness: Both poets yearned for this, and we have every reason to presume that in practical life neither of them could achieve this.[26]

We can point out in advance that in the Catullian oeuvre we can look for epicurean theorems in vain, since in his works the world appears transformed through the lyricism of his personality. In spite of this we can find in his poems such ideas in which we can suspect the reflection of generally known epicurean teachings. In carmen 5 he calls death an eternal sleep, and the same was taught by epicurism, *viz.:* with death everything ends: *Nobis cum semel occidit brevis lux, / nox est perpetua una dormienda* (5–6).[27] The main characteristic of Catullian love is the presence of *dolor*, of *cura*, such an absence of peace of mind that comes near to madness:

tecum ludere sicut ipsa possem
et tristis animi levare curas (2, 9–10);
tam te basia multa basiare
vesano satis et super Catullo est (7,9–10);
hoc, iucunde, tibi poema feci

ex quo perspiceres meum dolorem (50,16 – 17);
prospicit et magnis curarum fluctuat undis (64,61)
A misera, assiduis quam luctibus externavit
spinosas Erycina serens in pectore curas (64,72 – 73);
qualibus incensam iactastis mente puellam
fluctibus (64, 97 – 98);
quae tum alacres passim lymphata mente furebant (64,254);
nec potis est dulcis Musarum expomere fetus
mens animi, tantis fluctuat ipsa malis (65,3 – 4);
Quam penitus maestas exedit cura medullas (66,23);
cum vesana meas torreret flamma medullas (100,7), etc.

From these statements it can be seen that love to Catullus is something that carries off his peace of mind, and is the source of great sufferings. According to epicurean ethics the greatest evil is, if our body is tormented by pain and our soul by disquiet. By using the words *dolor* and *cura* Catullus fits such phrases into his poetry that were used by epicurism to denote the greatest evil. Lucretius, when he describes the ravaging passion of love shameful to an epicurean philosopher, formulates with the same words as Catullus:

idque petit corpus, mens unde est saucia amore (IV 1048);
hinc illaec primum Veneris dulcedinis in cor
stillavit gutta et successit frigida cura (IV 1059 – 60);
nec retinere semel conversum unius amore
et servare sibi curam certumque dolorem (IV 1066 – 67);
etenim potiundi tempore in ipso
fluctuat incertis erroribus ardor amantum (IV 1076 – 77);
inde redit rabies eadem et furor ille revisit (IV 1117);
usque adeo incerti tabescunt volnere caeco (IV 1120);

The love of ravaging and elementary strength is depicted also by Lucretius with the same words as by Catullus: *dolor, cura, fluctuat, ardor, saucia, vulnus, rabies, furor*. Researchers, interpreting the famous otium strophe of carmen 51, refer to many things, but to Lucretius.[28] Although, Lucretius also closes the description of the wild passion of love by saying that besides the many spiritual and physical sufferings, the passion of love also ruins our material goods and distracts us from the officium:

Adde quod absumunt viris pereuntque labore,
adde quod alterius sub nutu degitur aetas.
languent officia atque aegrotat fama vacillans,
Labitur interea res et Babylonica fiunt
unguenta et pulchra in pedibus Sicyonia rident, etc. (IV 1121 – 24).

It is noteworthy when, after many sufferings, Catullus decides to stop this consuming love, he thinks already only one thing important, *viz.*:

to remain healthy, to be able to live a painless life. This, however, coincides with the epicurean ideal of happiness: *ipse valere opto et taetrum hunc deponere morbum* (76, 25).[29]

Otherwise, when he describes that cloudless, bright happiness, in which he had a share for such a short time, perhaps in the beginning of the Lesbia-love, he formulates with such words that remind us of the epicurean *serenitas: fulsere vere candidi tibi soles* (8, 8).[30]

When carmen 61 wishes to its young married couples lasting and happy love, it stresses the brightness and unwavering constancy of this love: it offers equal joys night and day *quas vaga | nocte, qua medio die | gaudeat* (61, 117–19). But he formulates even more clearly at the end of the poem, where he also stresses health: *At boni | coniuges, bene vivite et | munere assiduo valentem | exercete iuventam* (231–35). Returning from his long journey to Sirmio, he formulates that epicurean theorem referring to himself that the greatest happiness is the free from cares: *O quid solutis est beatius curis, | cum mens onus reponit, ac peregrino | labore fessi venimus larem ad nostrum |, desideratoque acquiescimus lecto?* (31,7–11). For the same bright calm (*acquiescimus*) yearns also Tibullus striving for epicurean simplicity: *Satis est requiescere lecto | si licet et solito membra levare toro* (I 1, 1,43–44).

4. Summing up our observations, we believe that the classical philologists of our age are far from the truth, when they try to pick out biographical data from carmen 16. From the manifestations of the Latin poet successors it appears that in this poem they saw important conceptual statements, *viz.* the separation of the life and oeuvre of the poet, and the existence of such a genre of short poems, whose aim is delighting. Of these short poems the licentious topic and naked frankness are characteristic. Of the existence of this kind of poetry in the oeuvre of Catullus carmina 1–60, the so called polymetra, are illustrative, those poems to which Catullus applies the denomination *nugae*. The Catullian *nugae*, with their timely, everyday topics, their direct style and their emotionally coloured tone shocked the spokesmen of stoic ethics and taste, who from the playfully frank, almost effeminately sentimental poems inferred the immorality and effeminateness of the poet. Catullus stresses that the character of lyrical poetry cannot be measured with the stoic ethical category because the essence of this poetry is given exactly by the absence of stoic rigorosity and gravity. This poetry wants to delight, its aim is to arouse the *voluptas* in the reader. Although traces of this principle can also be found already in pre-Epicurean Greek poetry, still the poet could be moved to the theorem-like formulation of this idea by the *voluptas* principle of epicurism. The fact that Catullus knew the main doctrines of epicurism, and could make the *voluptas* principle of epicurean ethics the aesthetic principle of the short poems, is rendered probable by those epicurean ideas and Lucretius-parallels that have been enumerated by us above.

If our assumption is acceptable, then to carmen 16 as important a place is due in the Catullian oeuvre, as to carmen 1. On the other hand, about carmen 1 more recent research has established that it is a multiplanar programme poem.[31] By the conscious elaboration of these panels,

Catullus carries on a literary polemic against the followers of Ennius and against Cornelius Nepos. He defends against them the novelty of neoteric poetry. In our opinion, carmen 16 is a part of this polemic. In carmen 1 he formulates the novelty of form and content of his poetry with an ironic ambiguity (polished form – a content examining the spheres of private life), while in carmen 16 he shows the conceptual novelty of his poetry (the aim of his short poems is delighting, but the poet, who writes such poems, is not necessarily immoral). In carmen 1, he hides his remarks of literary criticism behind the mask of the friend expressing his gratitude, while in carmen 16 he conceals them among the cursings of the offended man. According to Havelock, Catullus opposed to this traditional Roman poetry unconsciously and without proper consistency, and tried to create a new poetry without taking sides with it with a theoretically sufficient emphasis.[32] It appears that Havelock's statement is not verified by more recent research.

[1] See of the more recent editions: Catullus. A Commentary by *C. J. Fordyce*. Oxford 1961; C. Valerius Catullus: Carmina Selecta. Con introduzione e note di *Francesco Arnaldi*. Milano 1967[7].

[2] C. Valerius Catullus. Herausgegeben und erklärt von *W. Kroll*. Stuttgart 1968[5], 35.

[3] *K. Quinn:* Catullus. An Interpretation. London 1972, 247; and Catullus: The Poems Edited with Introduction, Revised Text and Commentary by *K. Quinn*. London and Besingstoke 1973[2], 143–44.

[4] *E. Schäfer:* Das Verhältniss von Erlebnis und Kunstgestalt bei Catull. Wiesbaden 1966, 4–13.

[5] *T. E. Kinsey:* Catullus 16. Latomus 25 (1966) 101–103; of the same opinion is *H. D. Rankin:* Some Implications of Catullus, 16, 11–13. Latomus 29 (1970) 119–21.

[6] *D. Fehling:* De Catulli carmine sexto decimo. RhM 117 (1974) 103–108.

[7] The *pius poeta* is the good poet, who fulfils his duty towards the Muses well. As for the meaning of the *castus*, in the age of Catullus the *castitas* did not oblige bachelors to a chaste life, and not even to heterosexuality. The man was held a *castus* as long as he remained within the framework of the masculine role in his sexual relations: *N. Winter:* Catullus Purified: A Brief History of Carmen 16. Arethusa 6 (1973) 258–259.

[8] *G. N. Sandy:* Catullus 16. Phoenix 25 (1971) 55–57.

[9] On the charming lasciviousness of the poems by the poets mentioned above see A. Gellius XIX 9, 10–14.

[10] *H. Akbar Khan:* A Note on the Expression *solum ... nosse* in Catullus. CPh 62 (1967) 34–7.

[11] *Op. cit.* 35.

[12] According to *G. N. Sandy*'s statement the theorem *qualis vir – talis oratio* has been generally known since Socrates: *op. cit.* 53–54. Seneca denounces the style of Maecenas and Sallustius by using this theorem: Ep. 114.

[13] *É. Bréhier:* Histoire de la philosophie. I. Fasc. 2. Paris 1967[8], 290.

[14] *J. Ferguson:* Catullus and Cicero. Latomus 25 (1966) 871–72.

[15] *V. Buchheit:* Catull c. 50. als Programm und Bekenntnis. RhM 119 (1976) 162–180. In the beginning of this paper the author announces in a note that in the 1976 volume of Hermes he would publish a study on carmen 16. This number has not appeared so far, thus I could not take his results into consideration. See also *V. Buchheit:* Literarische Kritik an T. Annius Cimber (Verg. Catal. 2), Cicero (Cat. C. 49) und Sestius (Cat. C. 44). Forschungen zur römischen Literatur. Festschrift zum 60. Geburtstag von Karl Büchner. T. I. Wiesbaden 1970, 39–43.

[16] *P. Giuffrida:* L'Epicureismo nella letteratura latina nel 1 sec. av. Cristo. Vol. II. Lucrezio e Catullo. Turin 1948, 113–122.

[17] *J. Granarolo:* L'oeuvre de Catulle. Paris 1967, 220–224.

[18] These ideas are expounded by *E. Castorina* in his review on Giuffrida's book: GIF 5 (1952) 1, 80–86.

[19] *L. Ferrero:* Un introduzione a Catullo. Torino 1955, 96–111.

[20] *Op. cit.* 205–220.

[21] For example the epicurean concept of god such conclusions can be drawn that are harmful to the traditional Roman morals; according to Cicero: *Sunt enim philosophi et fuerunt, qui omnino nullam habere censerent rerum humanarum procurationem deos. Quorum si vera sententia est, quae potest esse pietas, quae sanctitas, quae religio* (De nat. deor. I 2).

[22] According to *Guido Della Valle*, about the doctrines of the epicurean school opened in Herculaneum by Lucius Calpurnius Piso Caesonius, many people were enthusiastic including also such distinguished Romans like Caesar: La personalità di Lucrezio. Napoli 1947. Atti dell' Accademia di Scienze Morali e Politiche di Napoli, 20–23.

[23] *K. Gantar:* Tristia II als eine Quelle zur Erschliessung der ovidischen Poetik. Živa Antika 25 (1975) 94–102.

[24] *M. Fuhrmann:* Einführung in die antike Dichtungstheorie. Darmstadt 1973, 133–34.

[25] See the recent literature on the relation of the two poets: *T. Frank:* The Mutual Borrowings of Catullus and Lucretius and What They Imply. CPh 30 (1933) 249–256; *P. Giuffrida: op. cit.: C. Bailey:* Lucretius de rerum natura. Oxford 1950², III 1753 ff.; *L. Herrmann:* Catulle et Lucrèce. Latomus 15 (1956) 465–480; Lucrèce et les amours de Catulle. Studi Castiglioni. Firenze 1960, 445–50; *E. A. Hahn:* Lucretius Prooemium with Reference to Sappho and Catullus. CW 60 (1966) 134–139; *H. A. Khan:* Color Romanus in Catullus 51. Latomus 25 (1966) 217–266.

[26] *J. Mewaldt:* Der Kampf des Dichters Lukrez gegen die Religion. Wien 1935, 20–24.

[27] Cp. *C. Bailey: op. cit.* II, 994: *In Catullus, the contemporary poet, there is no trace of fear, and death is regarded as an "eternal sleep"*. See the opinion of Lucretius:

> *Nam si grata fuit tibi vita ante acta priorque,*
> *et non omnia pertusum congesta quasi in vas*
> *commode perfluxere atque ingrata interiere,*
> *cur non ut plenus vitae conviva recedis,*
> *aequo animoque capis securam, stulte, quietem?*
>
> (III 935–939)

[28] *L. W. Ferrari:* Catullus Carmen 51. Wege der Forschung. B. CCCVIII. Catull. Herausgegeben von R. Heine. Darmstadt 1975, 233–61.

[29] *G. Della Valle* maintains that the Epicurean *voluptas theory* had a strong influence on the neoteric poets: *i lascivetti poeti neoterici che innegavano alla "voluptas" (op. cit.* 23). The fundamental importance of the *voluptas* is stressed by Lucretius so that placing it into the first line of his work, he compares it to Venus.

[30] The attribute *candidus* is in Latin literature the expression of bright, happy and chaste human life, free of extremes, cp. Tib. I 10, 45: *pax candida:* Sen. Med. 329: *candida nostri saecula patres / videre, procul fraude remota:* see ThLL ad locum.

[31] *J. P. Elder:* Catullus 1; His Poetic Creed, and Nepos. Harvard Studies in Classical Philology 71 (1966) 143–149; *B. Németh* arrives at the same conclusion: How Does Catullus Booklet Begin? ACD 8 (1972) 23–30.

[32] *E. A. Havelock:* The Lyric Genius of Catullus. Oxford 1939, 95.